### Education Governance Responses Woodstock Meeting (3/28/07) - Woodstock Union High School

29 Attendees (facilitated by George Appenzeller)

## Question #1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the present education governance system in your community?:

#### **Advantages**

Board

Close connection to community

local control

Close connection to superintendent

Teachers close contact with board and part of process

Towns have choice to spend more to improve ed. if justified

Close connection...board to principal

Local town/local budget

Community-based student-family-teacher

Volunteer hours

Taxpayer support

Non-weighted voting

Responsiveness to local family

Less transportation

Superintendent gets varied perspective

Responsiveness to needs of school

Sense of community and "local control"

Teachers and school board members have close connections to their constituents

Transportation is relatively short and cost effective

Local schools – local control...budget, hiring, town karma, town center, sense of community, small classes, demographic – travel

SU District....financial efficiencies, qualified administrative staff, share cost – pool resources, better source obtaining Fed and State fund grants

Special ed cost and administrative, staff

One board for each district (Hartland, Windsor, W. Windsor, Weathersfield

Focus, responsive and nimble in response to local issues

Connection to taxpayers

Face to face connections

Team approach to oversight of WSSU (Collective wisdom)

Engaged school board

Autonomy of individual towns' needs/decisions

It works – testing proves it

Board relationships, with children of community is well informed and engaged

Admin. & Financial functions centralized already

### **Disadvantages**

Different contracts, salary sche, policies

Special teachers often on multiple contracts with different rates

Redundancy

In WCSU, our superintendent situation works but not so in others

Lack of connection to board and superintendent

Cost of doing business higher

# meetings

Superintendent candidates

Lack of teacher grade-level peers

Social/experiential challenges of small class populations

Inefficiencies in delivering educational services

Attracting/maintaining quality personnel (faculty, school board, specialists, etc)

Super spread thin

Classes too small

Competitive salary benefits

Standards of education

Schools individual units

High cost declining population increase expectations

Duplication of service (trans., B&G)

Doesn't allow for pooling of funds for P/D and student prog

Common WSSU functions contracts?, calendars, staff devel.)

Less responsive to WSSU and more to local

# Question #2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the school district model suggested by Commissioner Cate in his White Paper?

### **Advantages**

Potential for more diversity for students

More superintendent candidates

Potential for more teacher collaboration

Fewer supers for commissioner to oversee

Super and staff – one board

One board can set direction and focus

Easy consensus for change

One teachers contract

Fewer meetings

Easier to fill board positions - one board

Standard ed programs with enforcement

Flexibility of assigning teachers to schools

Might improve consistency and commonality (coord. Transition from elem> hs

Less micro-management of superintendents by boards

Simplification of svcs.

Perhaps it will lead to longer retention of superintendents (WSSU mode addresses this)

Combined or pooling of P/D and programs (student)

Consistent district policies

Less administration and lower cost

More superintendent support for principals

Only for central office

Governance-simplified contracts, more clout for transportation contract, etc, more consistency in preparation for MS/HS

Implies a district contract

Philosophically allows district to think and act as a whole (supt. is focused on one board) More efficient

### **Disadvantages**

Less local input

Small town needs lost in weighted voting

Negligible or no cost savings

Towns/taxpayers could be coerced to support undesired budget

Potential for community discord

Less local support for school and school budget

Representation for small towns

Could close school easier

Local input is more difficult

Will it save money?

Control local – hiring input know your town – control farther removed up the ladder

HS board elementary boards different single board K-12 not best

Loss of local control/responsiveness

No cost savings

Who presents budget? – how does process work? Will we lose taxpayer support?

Equity issues between towns (small towns swallowed up)

Superintendent lacks connection with schools

More delegated to principals

Top Down/corporate model – this is not a corporation for what purpose?

It ain't broke (don't fix it) – testing proves it ... Top 5 in nation consistently

Big town vs small town

Fear of unknown structure

1 person/1 vote hurts the smallest towns

Homogenization of schools – losses – education character…better schools might slide/worse schools would improve "dumbing down"

No local control – or less

The largest town has all the power

Weighted voting would breed inequity and resentment

Implies loss of local control and community centers

### **Debrief Comments:**

Pushing governance structure perceived cost savings

not

Changing ed service model starts top>bottom

Education in 21st century still 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> century model

Full funding commitment from Fed>state>local to change funding model..Sp ed 17%, NCLB already \$90 B behind

Not a cost problem but funding problem

State should reimburse towns for each child K-12 age regardless of local school attendance

5M+ in state-paid should not leave the State of Vt.

Legislature acts too quickly

Unfunded mandates must stop

Too much testing

Streamline efficiencies/procedures/requirements of DOE – would provide cost savings (e.g.-data management

DOE should support statewide specialized programs across SU lines (eg-autism, E.D.,learning impaired, behaviorally challenged)

Provide more 'best practice' documents for curriculum and programs

Re-focus focus of Ed. from cost to what is best for children

Stop practice of punitive controls/directive to force change

If consolidation has to happen – use more of a progressive steps based on local needs (there's nothing wrong with hybrids – we don't all have to be the same)

Consolidation shouldn't cost us money (consultants, etc. should come from DOE) (does DOE have this capacity)

Joint contracts restructure 1 man/1 vote, give towns equal power, better oversight of home schooling, change funding appropriation from per pupil to per classroom

Unions form among similar size towns ----animosity

Equal representation on new boards

Unified health care and compensation contracts

Consolidated transportation

More cohesive governance system leads to more flexibility and delivery of educational services (curriculum, magnet schools, co-curricular offerings)

Governance that values structure and holds high expectations for all of its constituents

Governance that values efficiency (+ improvements) in purchase and distribution of supplies

Governance should be a model of cooperative learning and teaching relevant life skills

Stronger voice with respect to statewide and national assessments (NCLB)

Raise expectations of principals so sups.don't have to attend every meeting

Majority lack of support for proposal

Huge amt of su expertise – let's look at other models before being bound to one model

We are focusing on education not cost, cost, cost

Prior look at governance change revealed smaller towns would have had to pay more in taxes – important to recognize this discrepancy

Need to look at being more efficient in ed services it's all punitive measures, use technology to change ratio of how we teach teacher/student, we are operating on an old paradigm of teacher/student ratios, people are our most expensive resources